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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY SITUATION REPORT #41
(As of 1300 EST, 27 April 1984)

NOTE: This is the final Iran-Iraq Military Situation Report. Included is a summary of the current situation in the Iran-Iraq War. This Situation Report will be resumed if events warrant. [REDACTED]

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Persian Gulf

Iraq claimed its navy attacked three ships today between Khark Island and Bandar e-Khomeini. US AWACs detected two Iranian aircraft, probably F-4s, in the area this morning. The aircraft came within 6 miles of the Kuwaiti coast. [REDACTED]

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The super tanker, damaged Wednesday, is no longer on fire or spilling oil, according to press reports. Firefighters are optimistic about saving the ship and most of its cargo. [REDACTED]

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Iranian Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani said today that, if the super tanker was damaged by an Iraqi attack, Iran would respond but would not block the Strait of Hormuz. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Iraq probably attacked a convoy of cargo ships going to Bandar e-Khomeini today. OSA missile boats were probably used in the attack. The Iranian aircraft could have been responding to the attack and trying to strike the OSA boats. Rafsanjani's statement suggests the Iranians may attempt to attack ships carrying Iraqi cargo if Tehran decides the super tanker was damaged by Iraq. [REDACTED]

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This report was prepared by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis of the Directorate of Intelligence. Questions may be directed to the Chief, Iran-Iraq Branch, Persian Gulf Division, [REDACTED]

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Military Situation

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There was no significant ground activity in the past 24 hours. [REDACTED]

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Summary of Current Situation in the Iran-Iraq War

Iraqi air strikes and flooding on the Al Basrah Front apparently have derailed Iranian plans for a major offensive, at least temporary. Iran, however, continues to move units to the Al Basrah Front suggesting that it has not yet permanently canceled its plans for a major offensive there. Most of Iran's forces are now concentrated near Al Basrah and any major Iranian attack in the next month must take place there. Iraq is likely to continue its attacks on Gulf shipping at a stepped-up pace. Iran may eventually retaliate against vessels loaded with Iraqi cargo. [REDACTED]

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Iranian forces may eventually launch attacks across the Shatt al Arab south of Al Basrah and across the marsh north of the Majnoon Islands. Attacks in these areas would allow Iran to avoid Iraq's strong defenses east of Al Basrah. Such attacks would require some Iranian forces to redeploy from their present positions northeast of Al Basrah, but this could be accomplished within a few days. If the two Iranian Hawk sites under construction east of Abadan become operational they could supply adequate air cover for a crossing of the Shatt. If a bridgehead could be seized on the west bank of the Shatt, the Iranians could build a pontoon bridge to bring heavy equipment to the Iraqi shore. [REDACTED]

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Iraq has escalated its strikes against Iranian bound cargo and tanker shipping in the past two months and we expect Iraqi attacks to continue at a relatively high rate. Iraq claims to have attacked 16 ships in the Persian Gulf since 24 March. Several ships have been badly damaged and at least one sunk. One tanker was hit last week near Khark Island, but was only slightly damaged. The super tanker damaged Wednesday was probably attacked by Iraqi aircraft. If so, it would be the largest tanker yet hit in the war. We expect that additional tankers will be damaged and possibly sunk during the next few weeks. ☐

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A direct Iraqi airstrike on Khark Island is unlikely. Khark is not an easy target. It is well protect by HAWK missiles, anti-aircraft guns, and Iranian F-4 aircraft out of Bushehr. There is extensive excess capacity on Khark that can be used if some parts of the facility are damaged. ☐

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As Iraqi attacks on Iranian oil and cargo shipments become more successful, the Iranians will choose from several options for retaliation. Closing the Strait of Hormuz remains a last resort for Iran so as to avoid having the West involved. More likely are Iranian attacks on ships with cargo bound for Iraq. Iran also may strike Kuwait, particularly since Iran is aware of apparent Kuwaiti complicity in earlier Iraqi attacks. ☐

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